

Roads and Bridges
VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK ~~ROADS AND BRIDGES~~,
HALLS FERRY BRIDGE
Spanning Halls Ferry Rd. at Confederate Ave.
Vicksburg vicinity
Warren County
Mississippi

HAER No. MS-14-C

HAER
MISS
75-VICKY
6C-

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

National Park Service
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK ROADS AND BRIDGES,
HALLS FERRY BRIDGE
HAER No. MS-14-C

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Location: Spanning Halls Ferry Road on Confederate Avenue, Vicksburg National Military Park, Warren County, Mississippi.

Date of Construction: 1936-37

Structure Type: Reinforced concrete arch bridge

Contractor: Coggin and Deermont

Original Owner: Vicksburg National Military Park, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

Present Owner: City of Vicksburg

Significance: Constructed over five months in 1936-37, the Confederate Avenue bridge spanning Halls Ferry Road is the only extant bridge of its type in the state of Mississippi. The bridge was included in the portion of land transferred to the city of Vicksburg in 1963. Now lying outside the park boundary and outside of park jurisdiction, the bridge is in a precarious situation, facing possible alteration or replacement.

Project Information: The Vicksburg National Park Roads and Bridges Recording Project was conducted in 1997 by the Historic American Engineering Record. The project team consisted of Todd Croteau, project supervisor; Tim Davis, supervisory historian Pete Brooks, field supervisor and architect; Deborah James, landscape architect; Gregory Seale, architect; and Courtney Jones, historian. This is one in a series of reports prepared for the project. See also HAER Nos. MS-12, MS-14, MS-14A, and S-14B.

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The bridge spanning Halls Ferry Road on Confederate Avenue was not included as part of the original plan for the tour route at Vicksburg National Military Park. Prior to 1936-1937 an at-grade crossing existed at the intersection of Confederate Avenue and Halls Ferry Road. As sections of the park roadway were beginning to be eliminated during the mid-1930s in cooperation with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Public Works Administration (PWA), Georgia Circle was planned for obliteration. In conjunction with the plan for the removal of this small segment of road, it was decided that increasing traffic and congestion in the area of the intersection warranted construction of a bridge on South Confederate Avenue spanning Halls Ferry Road.

Bids for this project were opened on 2 July 1936. The contract for \$44,641 was awarded to Coggin and Deermont of Chipley, Florida. Built in cooperation with the CCC and PWA, this bridge is composed of a single arch of reinforced concrete, faced with brick. Construction of the 125' by 45' structure began in August 1936 with the commencement of excavation work.

By September, test piles had been driven at abutment sites and virtually all forms for the concrete had been built. Concrete pilings were then fabricated and cured for two weeks. Work proceeded slowly and it was not until February 1937 that piles were driven and footing caps

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placed.¹ The back walls of both abutments were then poured and brick work was started on the front and end walls. Interior forms were completed and concrete was poured.²

Excavation of footings for wing walls was conducted in April 1937 and the concrete was poured the following month. Facing for the intrados of the arch and vault was then completed. Excavations continued, making way for a drainage pipe line and catch basin near the east abutment.³

Progress on the bridge continued slowly and delays were experienced during late June due to the length of time needed for proper curing of the concrete arch barrel.⁴ Reports from August 1937 state that progress was fair during the previous month. Work at that time consisted of pouring concrete for the four spandrel walls, the four toe walls, and the top of the four wing walls. The contract deadline, 11 July, was not met. Work was completed for the most part in August, except for the cleaning of the intrados of the arch with acid and removing mortar stains from the brick in scattered spots.⁵ Final inspection of the bridge was made in September by F.E. Winter, Associate Highway Engineer with the Bureau of Public Roads, and Nelson Royal, resident landscape architect. In spite of the delays involved with its construction, the work on the

¹ Superintendent's Narrative Report, February 1937.

² Superintendent's Narrative Report, March 1937.

³ Superintendent's Narrative Report, May 1937.

⁴ Superintendent's Narrative Report, June 1937.

⁵ Superintendent's Narrative Report, August 1937.

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bridge was found to be satisfactory and the structure was recommended for approval and acceptance.⁶

The Confederate Avenue bridge spanning Halls Ferry Road is a single span concrete arch structure with red brick facing. Although this type of brick arch bridge was relatively common throughout the United States during and prior to the early twentieth century, this is the only known extant example of this bridge type in the state of Mississippi. This structure was nominated for the National Register of Historic Places in 1986, however, its situation is precarious. Located on the section of Confederate Avenue that was transferred to the city of Vicksburg in 1963, the Halls Ferry overpass is no longer under park jurisdiction. City officials are interested in widening Halls Ferry Road from two lanes to four, due to heavy traffic in the area. If approved, this project would require replacement or significant alteration of the bridge. It is hoped that a solution will be found that will protect the historical integrity of the bridge, while also allowing the city to better accommodate traffic on the busy thoroughfare. As of this writing, local park officials and city planners are working together to resolve this situation.

⁶ Superintendent's Narrative Report, September, 1937.

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SOURCES CONSULTED:

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